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Endostatin maybe not so good..?

Posted By: **Tina T**

Date: Sunday, 31 March 2002, at 8:45 a.m.

Hello, I caught this today
Tina

Ex-colleague of Folkman to publish negative endostatin results

18 March 2002 12:43 EST

by Apoorva Mandavilli, BioMedNet News

The anti-angiogenesis factor endostatin, which entered clinical cancer trials in record time after being propelled into the public attention in 1998 by a glowing front-page article in the New York Times, is under serious challenge again. Two new papers to be published next month in Molecular Therapy echo earlier reports from scientists who could not replicate claims by Harvard University's Judah Folkman that endostatin shrinks tumors by cutting off their blood supply.

According to a report in BioMedNet News today, opinion remains sharply divided in the specialist community about whether Folkman has observed a true biological phenomenon, because endostatin still lacks a well-defined mechanism of anti-tumor action and noteworthy attempts to replicate it have failed. The situation has prompted Molecular Therapy to take the unusual step of publishing negative results.

The new studies tried several approaches to detect a measurable effect with the protein: Transfecting the gene for a soluble form of endostatin into mice, and even injecting it directly into the bloodstream. Although levels of endostatin surged to 750% normal in the gene-therapy experiment, neither strategy showed any effect on either blood vessel growth or tumor size.

"We could not see an effect of endostatin any way we tried," said Philippe Leboulch of Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who carried out the research with Connie Eaves of the Terry Fox Laboratory in Vancouver and others. "It's important for the scientists and the public to know this," he added. Leboulch has collaborated with Folkman in the past.

Melinda Hollingshead, a researcher at the US National Cancer Institute, says that researchers launched clinical trials of endostatin under a "great deal of pressure," after a 1998 article in the New York Times lauded its anti-cancer potential, and this raised "a lot of false hope." Hollingshead is one of several other scientists whose lab has been unable to replicate Folkman's work.

Folkman tells BioMedNet News that although the papers are well done, they don't contradict his own results or any of 200-odd papers that substantiate them. "Something weird" may be going on that prevents the treatment from working when introduced via gene therapy, while it is effective injected as a protein, he adds. In the ongoing clinical trials involving some 180 patients so far, Folkman says, results have been "impressive" and some patients have shown tumor regression.



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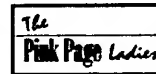
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"It's turned out to be a surprisingly good drug," he added. The clinical results will be published soon, in abstract form.

The negative results in mice don't prove that Folkman is wrong about endostatin, says Leboulch, who has collaborated with Folkman in the past. But he added "it's important for Folkman to recognize that one should look at different aspects, results that are not positive," he said. "Otherwise, it's too dangerous."

Whatever the clinical results, Hollingshead says, endostatin will not be accepted as mainstream cancer therapy until studies have clarified its mechanisms and resolved the inconsistencies between Folkman's labs and others. The scientific controversy over endostatin, she said, "has not even begun to be resolved."

Messages In This Thread

- **Endostatin maybe not so good..?**

Tina T -- Sunday, 31 March 2002, at 8:45 a.m.

- **Re: Endostatin maybe not so good..?**

Deborah -- Monday, 1 April 2002, at 5:05 p.m.

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